

I am afraid politics have gotten involved to where we are focusing more on the differences of what we might hope for than on what we agree upon. That is a shame because not only do we put a great confusion on these issues that I will talk about tonight, but we lose the confidence of the American people that we can even govern up here.

Last year, this President wanted to focus on getting the economy going. He wanted to focus on energy. He wanted to focus on regulations. He wanted to focus on taxes. Check the boxes. We did that. I believe we are seeing some of the early manifestations of that in the economy now, where 123 businesses just announced at the end of the year, year-end bonuses related to this tax bill that we passed last year. That is an example of where we can get together and make things happen.

I was in the Chair last night presiding over an hour and listening to conversations about a topic that I believe is very critical to where we are today. I heard several descriptions of a DACA bill but a bill no one has seen yet. It hasn't been presented. This is merely 1 day before we have to fund the government—before midnight tomorrow night.

In my opinion, I think most people in America believe it is irresponsible that Members of this body are threatening to shut down the Federal Government over this DACA issue.

Members of the other side of the aisle used to agree with that position. In 2013, the current minority leader said—and other people talked about this today: “We could say, ‘we’re shutting down the government . . . until you pass immigration reform.’ It would be governmental chaos.”

Well, that is what we are facing tonight. I just don't think there is any need for it because, honestly, if you want to solve the DACA situation, there is a deal to be done, but serious negotiations aren't being made right now because one side wants to create this issue and threaten to shut down the government, thinking they can get both, a financing deal that they favor, along with this DACA proposition. That is unfortunate.

Our men and women in uniform deserve better than that. You are an ex-officer. You know what I am saying. It is absolutely ridiculous that we are in the fourth month of this fiscal year in the middle of January—our fiscal year started October 1. It is absolutely ridiculous that we are sitting here today having not funded the government permanently for the balance of this year. No other entity that I know of anywhere—any business or any facet of operation—can do that except the U.S. Federal Government.

These two issues we are talking about have nothing to do with it and should not be tied together; that is, the DACA solution and funding the Federal Government. Given our global security crisis—and I do mean the word “crisis”

today—I think the world is more dangerous than any time in my lifetime. I can't think of anything worse than to tie up the funding for our men and women in uniform with an issue like this; that we all want to solve anyway.

I am shocked the Democrats would advocate that we shut down the government over a bill no one has even seen yet and an issue that has nothing to do with getting the government funded. Creating a false deadline for a DACA solution, I believe—and using it to hold military certainty hostage—is no way to govern. I think most people back home agree with that. That is what is wrong with this institution today. Both sides need to stop it right now. We need to get to a vote and fund this government.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I would like to make a few comments about the current immigration system. That seems to be the topic of the day recently. I want to tell you some of us have been working on this for years. Some in this body have been working on it at least the last decade. Three times in the last 11 years, this body has tried to solve this problem unsuccessfully.

I believe one of the problems with each of those solutions or attempts at a solution was they tried to be comprehensive. People are misusing that word today when they talk about what we are trying to do on this side. These three attempts, over the last 11 years, attempted to solve not just the illegal situation and the temporary work visa situation, but they also tried to solve the legal situation. They tried to solve all of this.

Today, what we are trying to do on our side is to solve just the illegal immigration system before we even talk about DACA. The legal situation is this: 1.1 million green cards are given out every year today. That is up from 300,000 in 1965, when this bill—the law we operate under today—was first passed. What we believe is, if we get this done, then the next step would be to move to the temporary work visas, where we give out 2.2 million temporary work visas every year. Those need desperate work. Both sides agree to that. Some categories probably need to be increased; others need to be streamlined. There might need to be a new category created, but that needs speciality work.

Then, of course, we have to deal with the people who are here illegally. Remember, 40 percent of the people here illegally, or thereabouts, came into this country under a legal temporary work visa or a student visa, or some other form of temporary visa and overstayed their visa. We are one of the few countries in the developed world that can't track overstays, but that is not what we are trying to do. We are trying to bring focus to an issue that will stop this continuing evolution of immigration problems.

I believe there is a better way, and there is a proposition to do just that. There was a meeting in the White House last week on Tuesday, and the President started out the conversation—it was bipartisan, bicameral. You heard my colleague from Iowa Senator GRASSLEY talk about this. As part of that meeting, I was moved by how the President introduced this topic. He said, with regard to the DACA situation, we need to develop a compassionate approach that demonstrates love in dealing with these young people who are here illegally but through no fault of their own. The President, in that meeting, defined the scope, and he brought a sense of urgency to this topic. He expects a result.

He undid what we believe was an illegal act by the past President in giving work status to these individuals, and said—now this is President Trump—he said: This is the responsibility of Congress to put a law in place to deal with this. I agree with that, but let's be very clear about what is going on right now. We are not debating what to do with the DACA individuals, mostly aged 15 to 36.

My colleagues spoke last night as though they are the only ones committed to solving the DACA problem. That is not true. People on both sides of the aisle—in this body and in the House—believe we need to solve this problem. These individuals did not break the law, their parents did. We all agree there is a solution to be had. Again, the question is whether we are going to solve DACA without dealing with the things that created it in the first place.

The President was very clear last week—and he has been consistent on this issue, as have those of us who have been working on this over the last year, this new, focused approach on legal immigration. The President made it very clear that any solution on DACA has to include border security—including a wall—an end to chain migration, and an end to this perverse diversity visa lottery.

If we don't actually solve what created this, we are going to be right back here in just a few years. That is the problem I have with the bill that is being discussed here, this so-called Graham-Durbin exercise. I just don't know why we would do that and knowingly put ourselves in the same position in just a few years.

Haven't we learned our lesson from what we did in 1986, 1991? We know kicking the can down the road on this is not going to give us any solution, but we have an opportunity because we have commonality in this body about what we need to do going forward with not only the DACA situation but this legal immigration system. There is a great deal of commonality in thought. I have done deals in the business world, and when you get this level of commonality, a deal should get done. There is a lot of symmetry here to be had if we would just talk with each other and

get at the real issues and put political issues aside.

If we give DACA recipients a path for legal status without a real investment in border security and a wall, we are going to further incentivize a new wave of illegal immigration.

By the way, the President has said this publicly. It is not necessarily a 2,000-mile wall, but it is a system of constraints where we know that we can protect our southern borders. It is not just an immigration issue; it is a national security issue, as has been demonstrated by two acts of terror just in recent months. The plans I heard last night don't even address that seriously. A \$1.8 billion allocation is not a serious attempt at that. The Dream Act—the estimated cost back in 2013 for doing that was \$26 billion. Today, who knows what that estimate would be. It has to be greater than that.

The second criteria in this was that if we are going to solve the DACA problem and eliminate the things that created this issue going forward, we have to deal with how to protect the family of the immigrant, the primary worker. We must protect the immediate family of the person who is sponsored and comes in as a citizen. But I believe there is a great deal of confusion about that. This is the so-called chain migration. There is nothing derogatory about that term. That was a term used by the Gang of 8 in 2013. The Democratic leader and the whip of the Democrats right now all used that term repeatedly. There was nothing derogatory and there is certainly nothing prejudicial about that term; it was a mere description of what happens in the current law.

The current law says this: The person sponsored for citizenship comes in as a legal permanent resident, moves through a period of time, and becomes a citizen. If they apply, they become a citizen. After that process, as a citizen, they can then sponsor their spouse, their immediate minor children, their family, their adult married children, their adult unmarried children, their parents, and their siblings. The only thing we are talking about is limiting that to the primary worker and their immediate family, and that would break the so-called chain as described by our Members across the aisle.

Let's be very clear. Seventy-two percent of Americans believe that immigration should be limited to the individual worker, their spouse, and their immediate family. Again, the only difference between that ethos and what we have today are the parents and the siblings.

Somebody says: Well, I want to protect the family.

Well, so do we. But whose family? The family of the sponsored worker or their parents' family or their parents' parents' family or their parents' parents' siblings' family? Which family? I believe the American people have spoken loud and clear about which family.

There is a significant portion who believe it should just be the worker, but

that is not our position. We believe we need to protect the family of that immediate worker.

There are some of us who are trying to get to a merit-based immigration system like Canada and Australia have been using for decades and they have proven works. It helps their society, builds their economy, and opens their doors with a welcoming hand for those who want to come. Canada is no bastion of conservatism in its immigration policy. Yet it has a merit-based immigration system.

Now, we are not proposing that. We are happy to wait for phase two, which the President talked about last week. Many people on the other side have absolutely discredited his words and confused them knowingly. What the President is talking about right now is, focus on this legal immigration system, solve DACA, solve the border crisis, eliminate the chain migration issue, and eliminate the diversity visa lottery. It is just that simple.

The diversity visa lottery is the last thing in his scope, and it is so easy. We all know that needs to be eliminated. The issue comes up in their bill that they want to reallocate the 50,000 people who are coming in today. We know that the diversity visa lottery is fraught with fraud. We know that it has been related to at least one act of terrorism, and it needs to be eliminated. How to do it is the question. Well, let's talk about that.

There is no reason why that can't be negotiated. But the Graham-Durbin bill, if it is ever offered, ensures that we will be right back here in a few short years. What we want is to have a solution on the DACA side and protect America from repeating this mistake again and again and again.

Let me be very clear. If we do what is on the table today in the Graham-Durbin bill, it would allow the parents of DACA recipients legal status. This would ignite future waves of parents entering the United States, putting their children at risk as they come across the border illegally. Thank God most of us have never had to deal with that. Imagine putting your children at risk coming across the border illegally. But then their children will eventually be given legal status, according to this bill and precedent, and then they will be able to sponsor their parents, who broke the law in the first place. Then here we go, reigniting another wave. So we have not done anything to prevent being right back here just a few short years from now.

I believe it is time for action. My colleagues last night talked about, well, nobody is offering up any other solution. Well, that is just not true. There are three Republican Senate bills right now that relate to this issue, active bills that have been filed, and they are out there. The language is out there. You can read them. There is one bill in the House. Chairman GOODLATTE was there in committee and brought out a bill. So it is just not true that we don't

have things to talk about on the Republican side on this issue. What is missing in this process is a good-faith effort to negotiate the details of a deal and make it happen.

To try to make an end run on that process is not going to work. I don't believe it, and I don't think the American people want it. What they want is to solve DACA and ensure that we are not doing it again in just a few short years. This means that we need a real investment in border security. We need to put a focus on the immediate family of the sponsored new U.S. citizen, the family of the incoming immigrant, and we need to end this archaic, outdated diversity visa lottery.

The solutions are here. I might not be 100 percent happy, they might not be 100 percent happy, but I promise you that in my experience, this situation is closer to a deal, a negotiated deal right now because both sides really want to see an end to the situation where there is a question about the DACA recipients. But we want to make sure we are not back here in 5 years or even sooner dealing with the same problem again. That is the lesson we should have learned from 1986 and 1991.

It is an honor to be in this body, but it is time for action. It is time to get to point B. We know we have been trying for over a decade with many Members of this body who are well-intended. I, for one, am ready to negotiate. The President is ready to negotiate. Let's get together and make this happen. It is time for action. The American people demand it. But let's please don't tie this solution to the funding of the Federal Government. That is totally irresponsible. Our men and women in uniform deserve better.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Democrats here in the Senate have really raised obstruction to an art form in this Congress. The Presidential nominees—they have obstructed and obstructed some more, even when they ultimately planned to support the nominee. We have had many nominees who have come to the floor who have been objected to and had to go through the long postcloture process, only to get to the end of it and have those nominees be voted out in many cases unanimously. I have seen that happen in the committee that I chair, the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. We have nominees over here who are noncontroversial who are being held up by the Democrats. Many of them are in important